



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Klamath Basin Area Office

6600 Washburn Way

Klamath Falls, Oregon 97603

IN REPLY REFER TO:

KO-300 (JHoblit)

ENV-7.00

OCT 22 2007

Ms. Irma Lagomarsino
Supervisor, Arcata Area Office
National Marine Fisheries Service
1655 Herndon Road
Arcata, CA 95521

Subject: Request for Formal Consultation Under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA)
on Klamath Project Operations from 2008 to 2018

Dear Ms. Lagomarsino:

The Bureau of Reclamation has prepared the enclosed Final Biological Assessment (BA) on the proposed operations of the Klamath Project, from 2008 to 2018. The Klamath Project is located in south-central Oregon and northeastern California. Reclamation has determined that the proposed operation of the Klamath Project during the years 2008 to 2018 may affect species listed pursuant to the ESA (50 CFR 402.12(k)) and is requesting formal ESA Section 7(a)(2) consultation.

Relative to the request for formal consultation, we have reviewed the description of contents as provided in 50 CFR 402.14(c). The BA contains: (1) a detailed description of the Project and its operation; (2) a description of the specific area that may be affected by the action; (3) a description of listed species and critical habitat; (4) a description of the effects of the action; and (5) incorporates by reference other relevant available information cited in the BA. The BA contains the best scientific and commercial data available.

The proposed action in the enclosed BA includes maintaining a minimum flow of 1300 cubic feet per second (cfs) in the Klamath River below Iron Gate Dam for the months of October through February, as contained in the Phase III, Dry Year flows as described in Table 9 of the 2002 National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Biological Opinion (BO). However, in an effort to provide maximum flexibility to meet coho salmon needs, we are evaluating the impacts of reducing the minimum flow discharge during these months at Iron Gate Dam from the proposed 1,300 cfs to 1,000 cfs during the months of October through February, and reducing late summer flows. This reduction in the minimum flow would provide the opportunity to shift available water to the March through June period, which corresponds with the out-migration of coho salmon smolt. We will be providing further information regarding this modification to the proposed action and its effects at a later date and will work with your office and the U.S. Fish

and Wildlife Service, as well as other interested parties, to further refine and analyze this potential flow regime during the formal consultation process.

We believe all information necessary to initiate formal consultation has been provided and anticipate the BO will be concluded within the regulatory timeframe of 135 days from your receipt of the attached Final BA to ensure Section 7(a)(2) consultation is completed prior to the 2008 irrigation season. We look forward to continued consultation and exchange of information during this timeframe and request the opportunity to review interim drafts of the BO prior to its finalization.

The Final BA will also be posted on our website, www.usbr.gov/mp/KBAO. Please contact Christine Karas at (541) 883-6935 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Pablo R. Arroyave
Area Manager

Attachment

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